



\$250,000 Grant Awarded to State Fire Academy

Funds to be used for first responder training

Jackson, Miss. (May 18, 2011) – A \$250,000 grant has been awarded to the State Fire Academy to fund advanced rescue training. The grant was presented by the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security, on behalf of the Mississippi Department of Public Safety.

The State Fire Academy will use the grant for advanced Homeland Security technical rescue training, including trenching and entering a collapsed structure. The grant is part of a \$200 million federal program being administered by the United States Department of Homeland Security. The program is intended to improve emergency management and preparedness capabilities at the state, local, and community levels as part of a comprehensive national emergency management system.

“Homeland security begins with our law enforcement and first responders in communities all over Mississippi,” said J.W. Ledbetter, Director of the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security. “These funds are used to enhance and improve our readiness for responding to a wide variety of threats and crisis.”

Ledbetter said the United States Department of Homeland Security has directed state Homeland Security affiliates to use the funding to enhance existing capabilities within individual states for responding to acts of domestic and international terrorism, use of weapons of mass destruction and biochemical agents.

The grant program is part of a federal plan for ‘All-Hazard’ response planning, beginning at local levels. The aim is to improve response capabilities for catastrophic natural disasters, potential for weapons of mass destruction, acts of terrorism, and chemical/biological/radiological/nuclear/explosive incidents. The initiative also improves local response capabilities for traffic agents, fires and other emergencies.

The Mississippi Department of Homeland Security, a division of the Mississippi Department of Public Safety, in fiscal year 2011 will distribute more than \$5.29 million in Homeland Security Grant Program funding in Mississippi for training and equipment.

For more information go to www.homelandsecurity.ms.gov.